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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TRSE-00 /102 W
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R 271630Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8137
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MASERU 0246

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SF, LT
SUBJECT: PRIMIN JONATHAN DISCUSSES U.S. POLICY AND SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER LEABUA JONATHAN ASKED ME TO CALL JANUARY 26 WHICH RESULTED IN AN UNPRECEDENTED (FOR US) TWO-HOUR TALK. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HOW I FOUND THINGS IN WASHINGTON, WHICH GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AID PROSPECTS AND LINK THEM TO CONTINUING USG CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS EVOKED FROM HIM THE ASSURANCE IN CONFIDENCE THAT "COMPLETION OF A CONSTITUTION AND RETURN TO ELECTIONS" ARE PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR. ON HIS AGENDA FOR COMMENT OR QUESTIONS WERE (A) U.S. POLICY IN SOTHERN AFRICA, (B) THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, (C) NAMIBIA, (D) ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROJECTS AND OIL EMBARGO. ITEMS A AND B ABOVE ARE COVERED IN THIS MESSAGE; THE OTHER TOPICS ARE SUBJECT OF SEPTELS. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL. IN RESPONSE TO PRIMIN'S INDICATION OF INTEREST IN IMPRESSIONS FROM MY CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON, I EMPHASIZED THE CONFIDENTIAL

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HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST WITH REGARD TO SOUTHERN AFRICA. HAVING BEEN ALERTED THAT HE WOULD RAISE AID ISSUES, I NOTED THE FAVORABLE PROSPECT FOR U.S. APPROVAL OF THE MOHALE'S HOEK-QACHA'S NEK ROAD PROJECT. I LINKED THIS PROJECT TO IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND LATTER'S DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.

3. I ALLUDED TO IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN LESOTHO

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IN RECENT YEARS AND URGED THAT GOL MIGHT FIND IT POSSIBLE TO BUILD ON ITS RECORD. PRIMIN SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED MY ENCOURAGING COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE RECOGNIZING THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO IN THESE MATTERS IN LESOTHO, I.E. COMPLETING A CONSTITUTION AND RETURNING TO ELECTIONS, HE COULD ASSURE ME CONFIDENTIALL THAT THESE MATTERS ARE WITHIN HIS PLANS "FOR THE CURRENT YEAR". HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SAY ANY MORE ABOUT THIS MATTER--"ACTION WILL SPEAK".

4. THE PRIMIN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE FRANKNESS WITH WHICH I HAD SPOKEN ON HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THE PAST YEAR. HE HOPED WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE FRANK AND OPEN AND KEEP HIM INFORMED OF OUR THINKING WHICH IS OF GREAT BENEFIT TO HIM.

5. SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE PRIMIN SAID HE IS PLEASED WITH THE INTEREST THAT WESTERN POWERS HAVE SHOWN AND U.S. LEADERSHIP IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN THIS REGION. THE U.S. HAS DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY ITS INTEREST IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. PREVIOUS U.S. NEGLECT OF THE REGION WAS ALWAYS A GREAT CONCERN TO HIM. THE CHANGE IS A WELCOME ONE. THE PRIMIN SAID IT WAS TO EMPHASIZE HIS APPROVAL OF U.S. POLICY THAT HE PUT HIS THOUGHTS IN WRITING IN HIS LETTER TO ME DATED SEPTEMBER 23, 1977. THE RESULTS OF PRESIDENT CARTERS POLICIES MAY NOT COME TO FRUITION TOMORROW BUT HE IS CONVINCED THEY WILL COME IN TIME. THE PRIMIN SAID HE IS NOT RPT NOT A BELIEVER IN PROBLEM-SOLVING THROUGH BLOODSHED--OR SANCTIONS EXCEPT AS A LAST RESORT. BUT HE FELT IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF WESTERN POWERS TO BRING PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA. IT WAS ALSO TIME TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESS SOUTH AFRICA WITH REGARD TO NAMIBIA (SEPTEL). HIS ATTITUDE ON SANCTIONS, HE ADMITTED, IS CONDITIONED BY THE FACT THAT LESOTHO WOULD BE PROFOUNDLY AFFECTED. ON THE OTHER HAND HE WANTED TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT IN THE LONG-RUN SANCTIONS ARE IN-ADMISSIBLE SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE EFFECTS THEY WOULD HAVE ON LESOTHO.

6. SOUTH AFRICA. TURNING TO SOUTH AFRICA, THE PRIMIN SAID THAT TOO MUCH AFRICAN BLOOD HAS ALREADY BEEN SHED IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE CAUSE OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS. THE U.S. HAS COURAGEOUSLY AND FORTHRIGHTLY COME OUT ON THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, HE SAID, "WE ARE BAFFLED BY THE CLOUDINESS OF U.S. PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA". HE ADMITTED THAT HE WAS EXPRESSING HIS OWN VIEW BUT HE ASSURED ME IT IS ONE SHARED BY THE GREAT MAJORITY OF AFRICANS. HE RECOGNIZED TOO THAT THERE ARE BLACK AFRICANS LIKE AMIN WHO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS. HOWEVER, THE PEOPLE WHO DO THE EVIL DEEDS IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE WHITE--SELF-PROCLAIMED REPRESENTATIVES OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION--PEOPLE WHO SPEAK OF THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPE ROUTE, ETC.

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7. HERE THE PRIMIN RETURNED AGAIN TO A FAVORITE THEME: THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S ACTIONS IN THE NAME OF PRESERVING WESTERN CIVILIZATION DO GREAT HARM AND ARE A DANGER TO WEST AMONG BLACK AFRICANS. HE POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH BLACK AFRICANS HAVE THEIR OWN CULTURES, THEY ARE (BY VIRTUE OF LONG ASSOCIATION) INFLUENCED BY WESTERN CULTURE. HE ASKED ME TO REPORT TO PRESIDENT CARTER THAT HE IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE SHORTCOMINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN LESOTHO BUT HE INDICATED AGAIN THAT HE PLANS TO RECTIFY THIS SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, HE SAID, GREAT HARM IS BEING DONE BY SOUTH AFRICA REPRESENTING ITSELF AS THE AGENT AND PROTECTOR OF WESTERN CULTURE. (THE PRIMIN INTERJECTED THAT HE HAD SEEN HENRY FORD'S RECENT TELEVISION STATEMENT DURING HIS VISIT IN SOUTH AFRICA. ALTHOUGH IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN HIS AMBITION TO MEET FORD, SINCE HARING HIM ON TELEVISION HE DECIDED HE WOULD NEVER WANT TO MEET HIM.)

8. REFERRING TO THE PRIMIN'S ASSERTION THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT SPOKEN CLEARLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, I REVIEWED THE U.S. RECORD BEGINNING WITH THE MONDALE/VORSTER TALKS IN VIENNA LAST MAY AND THE EMPHATIC NATURE OF THE U.S. POSITION. I NOTED THAT THE U.S.
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POSITION MAY NOT APPEAR AS CLEARLY IN THIS CAPITAL AS ELSEWHERE, ADDING THAT WE ARE ACCUSED REPEATEDLY OF INTERFERING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I MENTIONED THE CRITICISM OF SOME OBSERVERS THAT OUR OUTSPOKENNESS PRIOR TO THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA HAD, IN FACT, CAUSED A BACKLASH THAT PRODUCED FOR VORSTER AN EVEN GREATER ELECTORAL VICTORY THAN HE MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE RECEIVED. THE PRIMIN SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THIS INTERPRETATION.

9. THE PRIMIN SAID HE WAS REFERRING TO THE "DIPLOMATIC NICETIES" WITH WHICH WESTERN GOVERNMENTS TREAT SOUTH AFRICA. AS A RESULT, HE FEARED AFRICANS ARE DRAFTING AWAY FROM SUPPORT FOR THE WEST BECAUSE THEY ARE NO LONGER SATISFIED WITH THESE NICETIES. AFRICANS FROM THE FORMER BRITISH TERRITBRIES FRANKLY DO NOT LIKE THE BRITISH BECAUSE OF THEIR TENDENCY TO EMPLOY NICETIES-- ESPECIALLY WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA. BRITISH EXPRESSIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA ARE OFTEN COUCHED IN SUCH TORTUOUS DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE AS TO BE INCOMPREHENSIBLE. HE SAID THAT FORMER UK DEPENDENCIES, UNLIKE FORMER FRENCH DEPENDENCIES, NOW LOOK TO THE U.S. FOR LEADERSHIP. HE SAID THIS ATTACHMENT MUST BE PRESERVED AND NOT ALLOWED TO LAPSE. NORLAND

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